

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 22-28, 2014.

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Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report posted on the Office of Subsistence website by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 jpkoller@fs.fed.us

Sockeye

The Forest Service operates the picket weir and video-equipped net weir at Redoubt Lake. The picket weir was fish tight the evening of June 16th. On June 26th 124 sockeye salmon passed the weir bringing the season total to 2,120. The in-season model is predicting almost 120,000 sockeye salmon will enter the lake this year. This escapement prediction will stabilize as more daily weir counts are inputted. Based on this model we typically have a good idea what the total escapement will be by mid-July. In 2013, an estimated total of 49,124 sockeye salmon migrated into Redoubt Lake. The video equipped net weir was installed Wednesday June 25th.

The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weirs which will be operational the first week of July. The final escapement in 2013 was estimated at 1,120 while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 880. Subsistence harvest accounted for over than 98% of terminal area harvest.

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the sockeye salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational this weekend. In 2013, a total of 6,896 sockeye salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated total of 4,550 sockeye salmon were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
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Week ending June 28, 2014; statistical week 26

The weather for most of this week has been unseasonably cold and stormy and has reduced interest in subsistence fishing. There is a good forecast for this weekend and participation is expected to increase. There have been 51 permits issued and the catch estimate through Saturday is 8 Chinook salmon and 210 sockeye salmon. The following link provides a summary of Southeast Alaska and Yakutat commercial fisheries:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.salmonfishery_updates

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907)-789-6257 bvanalen@fs.fed.us or Jake Musslewhite (907) 789-6256

The sockeye salmon runs and subsistence fisheries are just starting in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. Project personnel have been counting fish through the double-redundant video net weirs at Neva Lake since June 16 and Kook Lake since June 19. Two hundred and forty seven adult sockeye salmon have entered Neva Lake and no sockeye salmon have entered Kook Lake so far this season. We plan to install the redundant video net weirs at Sitkoh Lake in July.

The Southeast Alaska purse seine fishery began in the area with a 15-hour opening on Sunday June 15 at Point Augusta and in the Hidden Falls Hatchery area. No boats fished at Point Augusta and only 10 boats fished at Hidden Falls. On Thursday, June 19, there was another 15-hour opening in the Hidden Falls Hatchery area and on Sunday, June 22, there were 15-hour openings at both Point Augusta and Hidden Falls with 8 and 24 boats fishing, respectively. The Purse Seine Fishery Management Plan does not indicate that the State is planning to take any new or additional management actions to reduce harvests of sockeye salmon bound for bays and streams in the Angoon and Kake area. Special restrictions will probably not be needed in 2014 since the seine effort reflects the pink return and the pink salmon return is anticipated to be relatively small as it has been in recent odd years. ADF&G forecasts a regionwide harvest of 22 million pink salmon in 2014. Brood year escapements of pink salmon were low and below goals in the northern inside area in 2012. ADF&G biologists anticipate that 892,000 hatchery chum salmon will be available for harvest in the Hidden Falls hatchery area this season. The pink, chum, and coho salmon catches were below recent 10-year averages in the Hawk Inlet test fishery on June 27. Pink and chum salmon catches were also below averages in the Point Gardner seine test fishery on June 27.

In the Yakutat area, the Situk River Chinook salmon run is anticipated to be relatively low again this season. The State closed subsistence fishing for Situk River Chinook

salmon on May 18. A news release was released on June 6 informing Federal subsistence users that the Forest Service will not be issuing Federal subsistence fishing permits to take Chinook salmon in the Situk River unless ADF&G personnel count enough Chinook salmon through the Situk weir to justify reopening the State's subsistence fishery for Chinook salmon. As of July 26, there have been 140 large Chinook salmon counted through the Situk River weir and the projected escapement for the season is expected to be within ADF&G's 450 to 1,050 biological escapement goal range for large Chinook salmon.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649 jreeves@fs.fed.us

The 2014 General salmon permits for Southeast Alaska are valid through the end of the year. Currently, 171 permits have been issued for this fishery

Most subsistence users are actively fishing marine waters for Chinook salmon and halibut under sport fishing regulations. Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of sockeye salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

A sockeye salmon weir is currently active and fishing at Hatchery Creek. To date 1,604 sockeye and 1 coho salmon have been counted at this project. Total passage at the Hetta Lake weir project is 180 sockeye salmon.

Commercial seine openings in District 2 and drift gillnet openings in District 1 have been ongoing for several weeks now. Commercial trolling for Chinook is set to begin on July 1. Commercial salmon harvests estimated by ADF&G issued news releases are as follows: 5,660 Chinook, 11,340 sockeye, 950 coho, 210 pink and 9,650 chum salmon.

Southeast Alaska Web Links

Tongass National Forest News Room

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Prince William Sound – Copper River – Molly McCormick, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve. (907) 822-7280 Molly_McCormick@nps.gov

As of June 26, 2014 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 823,745 salmon had migrated upstream. This estimate is 182% of the projected escapement objective of 452,502 for this date, or 371,243 more salmon. An estimate of 15,756 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on June 26th.

Miles Lake Sonar Estimates (Total Salmon)

Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate
1978	107,011	1987	483,478	1996	906,867	2005	854,268
1979	237,173	1988	488,398	1997	1,148,079	2006	959,731
1980	276,538	1989	607,797	1998	866,957	2007	926,438
1981	535,263	1990	581,895	1999	848,921	2008	614,999
1982	467,306	1991	579,435	2000	587,592	2009	709,330
1983	545,724	1992	601,952	2001	833,569	2010	924,010
1984	536,806	1993	797,902	2002	819,000	2011	914,285
1985	436,313	1994	715,181	2003	695,233	2012	1,271,354
1986	509,275	1995	599,265	2004	669,646	2013	1,267,060

Commercial fisheries salmon harvests in the Copper River District of Prince William Sound as of June 26 are:

- 9,528 Chinook
- 1,643,471 sockeye
- 283 coho
- 84 pink
- 39,372 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict opened this week on June 23 and is scheduled to remain open all week through June 29. It will immediately reopen on June 30 and remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries in this subdistrict usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Fifty-nine Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet

connectivity. Starting on June 16, 2014, the state personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was closed to the retention of Chinook salmon for the remainder of the season, by Emergency Order from ADFG.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15th and is expected to remain open until September 30th. 232 Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1st.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open - no permits have been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 23. As of June 26, 12,284 sockeye and 2 Chinook have been counted through the weir.

As of June 25, 1,829 Chinook have been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak and 162 tagged and 2,167 untagged have been captured at the Canyon Creek wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River was installed on June 4. As of June 26, 456 Chinook and 9,114 sockeye salmon have been counted. The river was high and muddy, and no counts were possible for 3 days this week.

By Emergency Order of the state of Alaska starting June 14, 2014, Chinook salmon harvest in the upper Copper River drainage sport fisheries was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook 20 inches or more in length.

The first event of a burbot abundance mark-recapture project in Grizzly Lake is taking place this week.

Two Special Actions have been issued by the park so far this season:

- setting the tentative preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict and delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict federal salmon fishery
- amending the preseason schedule for the week of June 30 – July 6 and providing the tentative schedule for future fishing periods.

Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Subsistence User's Guide

<http://www.nps.gov/wrst/historyculture/upload/Subsistence%20brochure.pdf>

Prince William Sound Federal Subsistence Regulations including Copper River.

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Prince.pdf

PWS and Copper River Flats – Milo Burcham, Forest Service, Cordova.

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The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am for a 36-hour commercial fishing period on Monday, June 23. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be open during this period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 724,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 408,000 fish. For the week ending June 21, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 11,715 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 14,273. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown next week. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 14 were 19% Gulkana Hatchery and 9% Main Bay. Harvest from the period that closed Friday, June 20 was 74,600 sockeye salmon and 137 Chinook salmon with 423 deliveries reported.

A total of 32 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued to residents of Cordova for fresh waters of the Copper River Delta. Harvest is not reported until after fish reports are returned at the end of the season. Sixty-five permits were issued for the 2013 season with a reported harvest of 358 coho salmon and 102 sockeye salmon.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 Jeffry_Anderson@fws.gov

Subsistence users have reported good success to date with dip net fisheries for sockeye salmon on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. A harvest of 896 sockeye salmon for the Russian River Falls dip net fishery (see following image) and a harvest of 35 sockeye salmon for the Kasilof River dip net fishery have been reported through 26 June. Totals of 108 Kenai River permits, 10 Kasilof River permits, and 7 designated fisher permits have been issued through 26 June.

An emergency Special Action to close all waters under Federal subsistence management jurisdiction in the Kenai River drainage downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake to subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon remains in effect through 11:59 p.m., Monday, July 14, 2014. As of June 23, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates that only 4,585 Chinook salmon have passed their DIDSON sonar site in the lower Kenai

River. Historically, approximately 75% of Kenai River early-run Chinook salmon have passed the lower river sonar based on average run timing. However, the run to date is likely showing early timing as are other Chinook salmon stocks throughout the state. Projections using early run-timing models indicate the early-run of Kenai River Chinook salmon will be near or below the minimum escapement goal of 5,300 fish by the end of the season on June 30. Therefore, it was warranted to keep the Federal subsistence fishery for early-run Chinook salmon closed. The sport fishery has been closed by the Department through Emergency Order since May 1.

Fish Counts through June 26:

Russian River early-run sockeye (weir)	35,644	(counts end on 14 July)
Russian River late-run sockeye (weir)		(counts begin on 15 July)
Kenai River late-run sockeye (sonar)		(counts begin on 1 July)
Kasilof River sockeye (sonar)	108,113	(counts through 25 June)
Kenai River early-run Chinook (sonar)	4,585	(counts through 23 June)



Sockeye salmon staging below the falls in the Russian River within the Federal subsistence dip net fishery area. Qualified rural residents have harvested over 800 fish in this dip net fishery area so far this season

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR

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Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

Next summary will be published in report #6.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kodiak.pdf

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Doug McBride Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office

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These areas support abundant returns of salmon, particularly sockeye; as well as some of the largest commercial fisheries for salmon in Alaska. All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the State of Alaska, and provide the basis for any inseason assessment. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in Federally-managed waters, and these subsistence fisheries commence later in June and July.

Bristol Bay:

Preseason forecasts for sockeye salmon run returns to Bristol Bay, Chignik, and the Alaska Peninsula predict that there will be harvestable surpluses in all districts, and that escapement goals will be achieved in all systems.

For Bristol Bay, the forecast for total return of sockeye salmon is similar to 2014 at approximately 26 million, and escapement goals total ~ 8.5 million sockeye, leaving ~ 17 million sockeye available for harvest. Total return to date is 4.1 million harvest and 2.6 million escapement. Test fishing to estimate total run strength into Bristol Bay continues at Port Moller. Commercial fishing by Emergency Order is occurring in Nushagak, Naknek/Kvichak, and Egegik districts. The return to Wood River appears very strong and the Wood River Special Harvest Area has been opened. The return to Ugashik appears very weak and no commercial fishing is scheduled.

Chinook salmon returns have been poor to moderate in recent years throughout most of Alaska, including Bristol Bay. Inriver return into the Nushagak River is ~ 44,000. Mesh size is restricted to 5 ½ inches through mid-July in the Togiak District.

Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Chignik:

For Chignik, the forecast for total return of sockeye salmon is approximately 0.8 million early run and 0.9 million late run fish. The early-run SEG was reclassified to a BEG starting in 2014. The late-run SEG includes an additional 50,000 sockeye for additional subsistence harvest opportunity. Commercial fishing management is based on early run assessment until July 4; then late run assessment after that. The early run appears very weak. Sockeye escapement to date is 232 thousand and no commercial fishing is scheduled.

The escapement goal for Chinook salmon is 1,300 fish. Inriver return to date through the weir is 195 which is the largest since 2005. In 2013, all inriver Chinook salmon fisheries, including the new Federal subsistence fishery, were closed by E.O. (State fisheries) or Special Action (Federal fishery closed effective July 27). No Federal subsistence harvest was realized for 2013. The Federal subsistence fishery for Chinook is currently open until August 9 with rod and reel from a point 300 feet upstream of the ADFG weir to Chignik Lake with no daily harvest or possession limit under the authority of a Federal subsistence fishing permit. Most of the Chinook return occurs in July. Federal subsistence fishing permits are available in four communities through village or tribal administrators.

Select tributaries to Chignik Lake are open to subsistence fishing. Gillnets and seines are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Several sockeye escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, McLees, and Orzinski rivers. Commercial fishing is underway in most districts and targeting local sockeye returns. Sockeye escapements to select Alaska Peninsula systems are: Nelson River (112.9 thousand); Bear River (96.4 thousand, and McLees (6.3 thousand).

A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Stock Assessment funded under the Subsistence Fishery Resource Monitoring Program: For 2014, there are no stock assessment projects funded under the Subsistence Fishery Resource Monitoring Program.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf

Southcentral Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

(907)455-0406 Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov or

Fred Bue Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is operational for the 2014 field season and can be contacted by calling (907) 949-1798.

Assessment Information

Assessment information is confirming that the Chinook salmon run timing is early this year and appears to be winding down in the lower Yukon. The summer chum run timing appears to be 2-3 days early and is just past the average midpoint of the run at Pilot Station. Both the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) and Pilot Station sonar has detected three pulses of Chinook salmon passing through the lower Yukon. Pulse one is passing into lower Subdistrict 5D and the Tanana River drainage. Pulse 2 is approaching Subdistrict 5A and pulse three is passing through lower Subdistrict 4A. The LYTF and Pilot Station sonar has detected three pulses of chum salmon. The first pulse is near Ruby, the second is between Grayling and Kaltag, and the third is passing Grayling. A fourth pulse of summer chum hit the LYTF on June 27 and should pass the Pilot Station sonar in three days. The Chinook salmon genetic stock ID program estimates that the first pulse of Chinook salmon to pass the Pilot Station sonar was approximately 50% Canadian origin and 50% Alaskan origin. The second pulse of Chinook salmon was 52% Canadian origin and 48% Alaskan origin. Genetic results from the third pulse are being analyzed at this time. The Rapids test fish wheel began operations on June 9 and has detected the first pulse of Chinook salmon. The Andreafsky weir and Anvik River sonar are just getting started, and the Gisasa River and Henshaw Creek weirs will start operations as soon as high waters at the weir sites recede. The Eagle sonar is anticipated to begin estimating border passage on June 28.

Chum salmon subsistence reports along the coast have been good and reports in the lower Yukon have indicated good catches with dip nets when summer chum have been available in large enough numbers to make dip nets effective. Subsistence fishermen in District 4 are just getting started with subsistence fishing with dipnets and live release fish wheels. Summer chum salmon abundance is expected to continue rising in District 4 and entering the Tanana drainage (District 6) in the coming week. Most subsistence fishermen have been conserving Chinook salmon and targeting summer chum salmon and other fish. However, recently, reports from LE and subsistence fishermen have indicated that a few fishermen in a couple of areas have been targeting Chinook salmon with 4-inch or less mesh gear. Managers anticipate closing all gill net gear in these areas until further notice.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The average midpoint of the summer chum run at Pilot Station is June 28, however it appears that the summer chum run may be 2-3 days earlier than average. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate on June 26, the estimated mid-point, was 1.3 million summer chum. Additionally, commercial fishermen have already harvested nearly 200,000 summer chum below the Pilot Station sonar. Based upon the Pilot Station estimate and the commercial harvest below the sonar, the summer chum is projecting above 2 million fish, well above the preseason projected range of 1.5-1.8 million fish.

At this time, based upon the Pilot Station sonar and other assessment information, the Chinook salmon run is coming near the high end of the preseason projected range of 64,000-121,000 Chinook salmon. The current preliminary in-season run projection is for a Chinook salmon run approaching 130,000 salmon. Managers are remaining cautious and the projection could go up or down depending upon the strength the Chinook salmon passage this coming week. Regardless, the Chinook salmon run remains below average, and subsistence conservation measures will be required to share the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals including the border passage objective into Canada. No directed Chinook salmon commercial or subsistence fishery is anticipated.

Management Actions

Managers have been instituting actions consistent with the preseason management plan. On May 16 the Coastal District and Districts 1 & 2 were restricted to 6-inch or less mesh gear to protect early run Chinook salmon while providing fishermen the opportunity to harvest whitefish. On May 26, subsistence salmon fishing was closed in the northern portion of the Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, and 3 to conserve Chinook salmon. Similar subsistence fishing closures were followed sequentially to District 4 and 5 as Chinook salmon arrived in those areas. Subsistence fishing utilizing 4-inch or less mesh gear is still allowed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Subsistence chum salmon fishing with dip nets was opened in Districts 1, 2, and 3 on June 1 which required the release of all Chinook salmon back into the river. On June 10, Districts 1 and 2 were put on a concurrent subsistence/commercial fishing schedule with dip nets and beach seines targeting chum salmon with Chinook salmon released alive back into the river. In District 1 and 2 subsistence only is open Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. until midnight.

The Koyukuk and Innoko Rivers were closed to subsistence salmon fishing on June 18 and June 19, respectively. District 4 has been opened to subsistence chum salmon fishing utilizing dip nets and fish wheels (with live release of Chinook salmon). The Anvik River was opened to subsistence chum salmon fishing utilizing dip nets and beach seines under the *Anvik River Special Management Area* plan. District 6 has been open on the normal subsistence fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods with gillnets restricted to 7.5 inch or less mesh size, however subsistence salmon fishing will be closed for two periods starting June 29. Subsistence fishing with 4-inch or less mesh gear is allowed 24/7 throughout the drainage during closures.

As the majority of the Chinook salmon move into upriver districts, subsistence fishing opportunities for chum salmon are being relaxed starting in the lower river districts. A short three hour subsistence period was opened in Districts 1 and 2 on June 28 allowing the use of 6-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear, however dip nets and beach seines are not allowed during this opening. A short subsistence fishing opportunity utilizing 6-inch or less mesh gill net gear is expected in District 3 as the third pulse of Chinook salmon moves into District 4. The Innoko River drainage was reopened to 6-inch or less mesh gill net gear on June 28.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon has been ongoing in Districts 1 and 2 since June 9. Commercial fishing gear has been restricted to dip nets and beach seines only with live release of Chinook salmon required. A total of 214,386 summer chum salmon have been harvested in the 17 openings in each of Districts 1 and 2, and a total of 5,096 Chinook salmon have been caught and released. The proportion of caught and released Chinook salmon to chum has decreased over the past week, a sign that the Chinook salmon run may be winding down. Seven, 24 hour summer chum commercial fishing periods were opened in Subdistrict 4A starting Monday, June 23. These are fish wheel only openings utilizing “fish friendly” fish wheels, with fish wheels manned at all times and all Chinook salmon caught required to be released alive directly back into the water. The processor is not quite ready and only a few summer chum salmon have been harvested in this fishery, so far.

Kuskokwim River – Brian McCaffery, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Brian McCaffery@fws.gov or Robert Sundown (907) 543-1007 Robert_Sundown@fws.gov

Kuskokwim River

Summary:

The Refuge along with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game with information from the Bethel Test Fishery determined that an adequate ratio of (chum/sockeye):Chinook existed to permit the continuous use of 6” gillnets for the remainder of the season in conservation sections 1 through 3 beginning on Monday, June 30th. All weirs with the exception of Tuluksak have been installed. The Takotna River weir will not be installed

this year due to lack of funding. The law enforcement operation on the Kuskokwim came to an end this week.

Bethel Test Fish:

- Through the evening tide on June 29th the cumulative index was 573. At this time last year, the cumulative index was 206; a year escapement was not achieved.
- Through the evening tide on June 29th the cumulative chum index was 2,155, at this time last year the cumulative index was 1,020.
- Sockeye salmon have an index of 498 through June 29th. At this time last year the cumulative index was 614.

Kwethluk River Weir: Through June 29th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 270.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 228.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 242.

Tuluksak River Weir: In process of installation.

Salmon River Weir: Through June 29th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 49.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 21.

George River Weir: Through July 29th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 42.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 174.

Tatlawiksuk River Weir: Through June 29th

- King salmon cumulative count total 182.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 173.

Kogrugluk River Weir: Through July 29th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 102.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 274.
- Sockeye escapement to date total 0.

Management Actions:

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game issued an Emergency Order to allow the use of 6" gillnets for the remainder of the season beginning June 30th. The Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group met on Thursday, June 26th. There was some concern from upriver fisherman that there was little success for chum and sockeye upriver of Kalskag. There was an overall sense of ease that subsistence fishing with larger mesh had resumed and subsistence fishermen were allowed to begin filling their fish racks. It is too early to

determine if the conservation efforts for Chinook salmon will have a positive effect on escapement. This next week typically sees the peak daily counts at the weir projects.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf

NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

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Norton Sound

Early chum salmon run strength indices in most areas are better than expected. Consequently, commercial salmon openings directed at chum salmon were announced to begin this week in the Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts. As the week progressed, pink salmon runs showed good initial run strength as indexed by escapement counts and strong incidental catches of pink salmon in directed chum salmon openings. This resulted in ADF&G announcing directed commercial pink salmon openings for this coming weekend in the Golovin, Elim and Norton Bay Subdistricts. Also, an additional 24-hour subsistence fishing opening using beach seines will be allowed in the freshwaters of the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts this weekend.

All waters from Rocky point to Point Romanof remain closed to sport fishing for Chinook salmon.

Other Southern Norton Sound Waters (Black Point to Point Romanof)

All marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing through June 30, 2014. All the waters from Wood Point to Point Romanof remain open for subsistence salmon fishing 7 days a week but fisherman are requested to use set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less to minimize incidental harvests of Chinook salmon.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets for 18 hours between 12:00 midnight Friday evening, June 27 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday evening, June 28. Gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The freshwater areas of the Subdistrict were reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with beach seines for 30 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. The mesh size for beach seines could not exceed 4.5 inches. Chinook salmon inadvertently captured while seining for other species were required to be immediately returned to the water alive and unharmed. Additionally, all freshwaters of the Subdistrict will reopen to subsistence salmon fishing with beach seines for 24 hours effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 28. Beach seine mesh size may not exceed 4.5 inches and Chinook salmon inadvertently captured must be immediately returned to the water alive and unharmed.

North River Tower – A cooperative project of Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDCC) with assistance from Fish & Game. It has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings; 25,000 pinks; 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey); and no goal yet established for chums. Updated counts will be provided later when available.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir – A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, United States BLM and NSEDCC with major funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. There are no weir escapement goals yet. Updated counts will be provided later when available.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets for 18 hours between 12:00 midnight Friday evening, June 27 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday evening, June 28. Gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The freshwater areas of the Subdistrict were reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with beach seines for 30 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. The mesh size for beach seines could not exceed 4.5 inches. Chinook salmon inadvertently captured while

seining for other species were required to be immediately returned to the water alive and unharmed. Additionally, all freshwaters of the Subdistrict will reopen to subsistence salmon fishing with beach seines for 24 hours effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 28. Beach seine mesh size may not exceed 4.5 inches and Chinook salmon inadvertently captured must be immediately returned to the water alive and unharmed.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. It has no escapement goals established. Counts began on June 17 with 2 kings and 1 chum being counted before high and turbid water resulted in counts being suspended. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict were opened to commercial salmon fishing for 24 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets restricted to mesh size no larger than 6 inches. An additional commercial salmon opening for 24 hours was announced to begin effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June, 28. Permit holders in this directed pink salmon commercial fishery will be restricted to nets with a stretched mesh size no larger than 4 and one-half inches in length. Any salmon retained for subsistence purposes are required to be recorded in the personal use section at the bottom of the fish ticket.

For subsistence fishing, all marine waters of the Subdistrict and the Ungalik and Inglutalik River drainages reopened to subsistence salmon fishing for 48 hours beginning 12:00 Wednesday, June 25. The Koyuk River remains open to subsistence salmon fishing for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. Updated counts will be provides when available.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict were opened to commercial salmon fishing for 24 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets restricted to mesh size no larger than 6 inches. An additional commercial salmon opening for 24 hours was announced to begin effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June, 28. Permit holders in this directed pink salmon commercial fishery will be restricted to nets with a stretched mesh size no larger than 4 and one-half inches in length. Any salmon retained for subsistence purposes are required to be recorded in the personal use section at the bottom of the fish ticket.

For subsistence fishing, the retention of king salmon is prohibited and the use of bait when using hook and line is banned until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Kwiniuk River Tower – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC. It has escapement goals of 300-550 kings, 11,500 – 23,000 chums, 8,400 pinks, and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). Counts began on June 15. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict were opened to commercial salmon fishing for 24 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets restricted to mesh size no larger than 6 inches. An additional commercial salmon opening for 24 hours was announced to begin effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June, 28. Permit holders in this directed pink salmon commercial fishery will be restricted to nets with a stretched mesh size no larger than 4 and one-half inches in length. Any salmon retained for subsistence purposes are required to be recorded in the personal use section at the bottom of the fish ticket.

For subsistence fishing, the retention of king salmon is prohibited and the use of bait when using hook and line is banned until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Fish River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. No escapement goals established. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

The Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule went into effect June 15, 2014. A Nome Subdistrict subsistence permit is required to harvest salmon when subsistence fishing.

The weekly schedule for all marine waters west of Cape Nome is from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Saturday. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will remain open seven days a week for subsistence gillnet fishing. Gillnets up 300 feet in length are allowed in the marine waters. Drift netting is not allowed.

The schedule for all fresh waters in the Subdistrict is from 6 p.m. Monday until 6 p.m. Wednesday and from 6 p.m. Thursday until 6 p.m. Saturday. Specific fresh waters open to gillnet fishing are listed on the permit. Gillnets up to 50 feet in length are allowed, but no more than one-half of any channel may be blocked by gillnets. Drift netting is not allowed.

Beach seining is allowed during subsistence gillnet fishing periods from June 15 through July 25.

Subsistence hook and line fishing is open at all times. Sport fish bag limits apply when using hook and line outside of Nome Subdistrict subsistence areas.

The Penny and Cripple rivers are closed to both sport and subsistence chum salmon fishing.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project has no escapement goals established. Set up is scheduled for next week.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 3,200 pink salmon. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Glacial Lake Weir – A cooperative project between and Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 800 – 1,600 sockeyes based on aerial survey. Updated counts will be provided when available.

Port Clarence District

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 4,000 – 8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. Updated information will be provided when available.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue and Norton Sound Areas

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kotz.pdf

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Norton.pdf